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HIGHLIGHTS:

Annual Red Meat Production
February Red Meat Production
Potato Stocks
Milk Production
Organic Grains, Legumes, Oilseeds
Sheep & Lamb Losses
Cattle on Feed
Egg Production

Annual Red Meat Production

Montana slaughter plants produced 16.8 million pounds, dressed weight, of red meat during 2002, compared with 16.4 million pounds in 2001. There were 20,200 cattle slaughtered during 2002, up 2% from the previous year. The total live weight of 23.3 million pounds was up 2% from a year earlier. The average live weight was up 3 pounds to 1,152 pounds.

There were 15,000 hogs slaughtered in Montana, an increase of 1,300 head from 2001. Total live weight at 3.5 million pounds was up 6% from the last year. The average live weight was 236 pounds per head compared with 244 the previous year. Sheep slaughter amounted to 3,800 head, an increase of 200 head from a year earlier. The average live weight at 122 pounds was 2 pounds heavier than the previous year. Total live weight of all sheep and lambs slaughtered in 2002 increased 9% from 2001 to 465,000 pounds.

The number of federally inspected slaughter plants in Montana on January 1, 2003, was 10, down one plant from 2001. There were 147 non-federally inspected plants on January 1, 2003, up 8 from the same date a year ago.

Red meat production in commercial plants and on farms for the United States totaled 47.3 billion pounds in 2002, a new record high. Red meat includes beef, veal, pork, and lamb and mutton. Red meat production in commercial plants totaled 47.2 billion pounds.

Beef production, at 27.2 billion pounds, rose 1% above the previous record high set in 2000. Veal production totaled 205.2 million pounds, up 1% from the record low set last year. Pork production, at 19.7 billion pounds, was 2% above the record high set

in 1999. Lamb and mutton production totaled 222.2 million pounds, falling 3% below the previous record low set a year ago.

Commercial cattle slaughter during 2002 totaled 35.7 million head, up 1% from 2001, with federal inspection comprising 98.3% of the total. The average live weight was 1,251 pounds, up 30 pounds from a year ago. Steers comprised 49.9% of the total federally inspected slaughter, heifers 32.3%, dairy cows 7.4%, other cows 8.7%, and bulls 1.7%.

Commercial calf slaughter totaled 1.05 million head, up 4% from a year ago with 97.5% under federal inspection. The average live weight was 312 pounds, down 8 pounds from a year earlier.

Commercial hog slaughter totaled 100.3 million head, up 2% from 2001, with 98.7% of the hogs slaughtered under federal inspection. The average live weight, at 265 pounds, was up 1 pound from last year. Barrows and gilts comprised 96.5% of the total federally inspected slaughter.

Commercial sheep and lamb slaughter, totaled 3.29 million head, up 2% from 2001, with 94.1% comprised by federal inspection. The average live weight fell 7 pounds from 2001 to 133 pounds.

There were 879 slaughtering plants under federal inspection on January 1, 2003, compared with 881 last year. Of these, 706 slaughtered at least one head of cattle during 2002 with 15 slaughtering over 56% of the total cattle killed. There were 683 plants that slaughtered hogs, with 13 accounting for 57% of the total. Likewise, 6 of the 268 plants that slaughtered calves accounted for 49% of the total and 7 of the 525 plants that slaughtered sheep or lambs in 2002 comprised 80% of the total head. Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and Texas accounted for over 52% of the United States commercial red meat production in 2002.

February Red Meat Production

Montana slaughter plants produced 1.3 million pounds, dressed weight, of red meat during February 2003, down 2% from February 2002 and 6% from January 2003. Cattle slaughter totaled 1,600 head, down 6% from a year ago. The average live

weight, at 1,146 pounds, decreased 1 pound from last year.

During February there were 1,200 hogs slaughtered, up 100 head from a year ago. The average live weight, at 237 pounds, was up 3% from last year. February sheep slaughter in the state totaled 300 head, the same as February 2002. The average live weight decreased 3% from last year to 123 pounds.

Commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 3.50 billion pounds in February, virtually unchanged from the 3.50 billion pounds produced in February 2002.

Beef production, at 1.94 billion pounds, was 2% below the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.57 million head, down 2% from February 2002. The average live weight was 1,261 pounds, up 6 pounds from February a year ago.

Veal production totaled 15.8 million pounds, 10% above February a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 83,100 head, up 14% from February 2002. The average live weight was 316 pounds, down 10 pounds from February a year ago.

Pork production totaled 1.52 billion pounds, up 3% from the previous year. Hog kill totaled 7.68 million head, 2% above February 2002. The average live weight was 267 pounds, unchanged from February a year ago.

Lamb and mutton production, at 15.0 million pounds, was down 16% from February 2002. Sheep slaughter totaled 224,200 head, 14% below last year. The average live weight was 133 pounds, down 4 pounds from February a year ago.

National Agricultural Week,
March 16-22, is a good time to say thanks to all of Montana's agricultural producers that supply food and fiber to people in Montana, across the country, and around the world. Thank you!

Montana Potato Stocks Down 13 Percent, U.S. Up 3 percent

Montana potato producers held 2.8 million cwt. of potatoes in storage on March 1, 2003, down 13 percent from the previous year. Eighty-seven percent of the 2002 Montana potato crop is still in storage.

The 15 major potato States held 164 million cwt of potatoes in storage March 1, 2003, up 3 percent from last year but 17 percent below 2001. Storage accounts for 40 percent of the 2002 fall storage States' production, down 1 percentage point from last year.

Disappearance, at 247 million cwt, from the start of harvest in 2002 to March 1, is up 8 percent from the same period last year but 5 percent below two years ago. February disappearance was 33.6 million cwt, virtually unchanged from a year ago but 8 percent below two years ago. Shrink and loss, at 22.2 million cwt, is up 2 percent from last year but 24 percent below two years ago.

Processors used 126 million cwt of 2002 crop potatoes so far this season, up 10 percent from a year ago but 4 percent below two years ago. February usage of 18.8 million cwt is 2 percent above last year and 3 percent above two years ago. Dehydrators used 28.0 million cwt to date. This processing report does not include chip potatoes from the Klamath Basin of Oregon and California.

Western States held 121 million cwt of potatoes in storage on March 1, up 6 percent from last year but 18 percent below two years ago. Idaho's potato stocks are up 7 percent from last year and Colorado's are up 35 percent. Washington's potato stocks are 2 percent above last year, but Oregon's storage is down 14 percent. California's stocks are 67 percent above last year and Montana's are up 14 percent.

February Milk Production Up

Milk production in the 20 major States during February totaled 11.6 billion pounds, up 1.7 percent from February 2002. January revised production, at 12.5 billion pounds, was up 1.8 percent from January 2002. The January revision represented an increase of 1 million

pounds from last month's preliminary production estimate.

Production per cow in the 20 major States averaged 1,485 pounds for February, 13 pounds above February 2002. The number of milk cows on farms in the 20 major States was 7.81 million head, 66,000 head more than February 2002, and 3,000 head more than January 2003.

Organic Grains, Legumes, and Oilseeds

Organic farming is one of the fastest growing segments of U.S. agriculture. As consumer interest continues to gather momentum, many U.S. producers, manufacturers, distributors, and retailers are specializing in growing, processing, and marketing an ever-widening array of organic agricultural and food products.

Organic grain, oilseed, and legume production relies on ecologically based practices, such as biological pest management and composting, and crops are produced on land that has had no prohibited substances applied to it for at least 3 years prior to harvest. Soil fertility and crop nutrients are managed through tillage and cultivation practices, crop rotations, and cover crops, supplemented with manure and crop waste material and allowed synthetic substances. Crop pests, weeds, and diseases are controlled through physical, mechanical, and biological control management methods.

U.S. farmers produced certified organic grain crops on over 291,000 acres in 1997. A variety of certified organic grains was grown in 35 States in 1997

North Dakota was the top producing State, with over 50,000 acres. Another dozen States - **Montana**, Minnesota, Idaho, Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa, Utah, Kansas, California, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Texas - had at least 10,000 certified organic acres of grain crops

Corn, **wheat**, and **oats** were grown organically in over 24 States in 1997. **Wheat** was produced under certified organic farming systems on over 125,000 acres in 1997, **corn** was grown on over 42,000 acres, and **oats** and **barley** were each grown on almost 30,000 acres. Other certified organic grain crops - **sorghum**,

rice (including wild rice), **spelt**, **millet**, **buckwheat**, and **rye** - were grown on under 15,000 acres each. State and private groups certified another 22,967 acres of organic grain crops in 1997 that could not be broken out into acreage for specific crops.

Certified organic grain acreage was well under 1 percent of the U.S. total for **corn**, **wheat**, **barley**, and **rice**. However, between 1 and 3.5 percent of the U.S. **oats**, **millet**, and **rye** crops were certified organic in 1997. About a third of two specialty grain crops - **spelt** (used in cereals and other food products) and **buckwheat** - were grown under certified organic farming systems in 1997.

Soybeans are the top legume crop grown under certified organic farming systems. U.S. growers produced over 82,000 acres of certified organic soybeans in 1997. Organic soybeans accounted for 0.1 percent of total soybean acreage in the United States.

Certified organic **dry peas** and **lentils** were grown on nearly 5,200 acres in the United States in 1997. **Montana** and **North Dakota** led with over 1,500 acres each. Organic dry peas and lentils accounted for about 1 percent of the total dry pea and lentil acreage in the United States in 1997.

Certified organic **dry beans** were grown on over 4,600 acres in 1997, and California had almost a quarter of those acres.

Certified organic oilseeds - including **flax** and **sunflowers** - were grown on 31,400 acres in 18 States in 1997. Certified organic sunflowers were grown on almost 11,000 acres, and flax was grown on over 8,000 acres. **North Dakota** was by far the biggest producer, with over 7,000 acres of flax and 4,500 acres of sunflowers. Certified organic flax represented almost 6 percent of total U.S. flax acreage in 1997, while organic sunflowers represented 0.4 percent of the total sunflower acreage.

SOURCE: *Recent Growth Patterns in the U.S. Organic Foods Market*, Catherine Greene/AIB-777, September 2002, Economic Research Service/USDA.

Montana sheep and lamb producers lost 67,000 animals to weather, predators, disease and other causes during 2002, representing a total value of more than \$4.1 million. While the total number of sheep and lambs lost increased only 1,000 head from last year, the total value of inventory lost was 29 percent higher than a year ago. Higher average market prices this past year resulted in an increase to sheep and lamb values. Total inventory is 7 percent lower than the previous year. Sheep and lamb deaths amounted to 9.9 percent of the January 1 inventory and lambs born -- slightly more than the previous year.

to 3.2 percent of the January 1 inventory and lambs born and 32 percent of all sheep and lamb deaths. Coyotes remained the largest predator for both sheep and lambs. Coyotes accounted for 65 percent of the predator caused losses and 21 percent of all death losses in the state. The value of losses attributed to coyotes was \$809,200.

Producers reported less sheep and lambs lost to unknown causes this past year. This resulted in a 24 percent decrease in the number of sheep and lambs lost to unknown causes from last year. Lambs lost to unknown causes totaled 3,500 head, compared with 5,100 head last year. Unknown causes claimed 2,200 sheep,

U.S. Cattle on Feed Down

Placements in feedlots during February totaled 1.66 million, 8 percent below 2002 but 5 percent above 2001. Net placements were 1.59 million. During February, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 263,000, 600-699 pounds were 376,000, 700-799 pounds were 597,000, and 800 pounds and greater were 421,000. Marketings of fed cattle during February totaled 1.73 million, 4 percent below 2002 and 1 percent below 2001. Other disappearance totaled 71,000 during February, 13 percent above 2002 but 12 percent below 2001.

Cause of Loss	SHEEP LOSS				LAMB LOSS				TOTAL LOSS			
	Number of Head		Value in Dollars (000) 1/, 3/		Number of Head		Value in Dollars (000) 2/, 3/		Number of Head		Value in Dollars (000) 3/	
	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002
Predators												
Fox	—	100	—	9.8	900	1,200	32.3	57.8	900	1,300	32.3	67.6
Dog	500	500	40.0	49.0	600	500	21.5	24.1	1,100	1,000	61.5	73.1
Coyote	2,100	2,800	168.0	274.4	12,200	11,100	437.7	534.8	14,300	13,900	605.7	809.2
Eagle	100	100	8.0	9.8	1,500	1,500	53.8	72.3	1,600	1,600	61.8	82.1
Bobcat	—	100	—	9.8	100	200	3.6	9.6	100	300	3.6	19.4
Bear	200	300	16.0	29.4	300	300	10.8	14.5	500	600	26.8	43.9
Mountain Lion	100	200	8.0	19.6	300	500	10.8	24.1	400	700	18.8	43.7
Wolf	—	300	—	29.4	—	200	—	9.6	—	500	—	39.0
Other Animals	—	200	—	19.6	—	200	—	9.6	—	400	—	29.2
Unknown Predators	100	300	8.0	29.4	900	800	32.3	38.5	1,000	1,100	40.3	67.9
Total Predators	3,100	4,900	248.0	480.2	16,800	16,500	602.8	795.0	19,900	21,400	850.8	1,275.2
Non-Predators												
All Diseases	2,200	1,500	176.0	147.0	8,300	6,600	297.8	318.0	10,500	8,100	473.8	465.0
Weather Conditions	1,200	1,900	96.0	186.2	7,100	11,500	254.7	554.1	8,300	13,400	350.7	740.3
Poison	1,100	800	88.0	78.4	500	700	17.9	33.7	1,600	1,500	105.9	112.1
Lambing Complications	1,800	1,700	144.0	166.6	5,600	6,200	200.9	298.7	7,400	7,900	344.9	465.3
On Back	1,200	700	96.0	68.6	—	100	—	4.8	1,200	800	96.0	73.4
Old Age	5,000	2,500	400.0	245.0	—	—	—	—	5,000	2,500	400.0	245.0
Theft	300	300	24.0	29.4	500	600	17.9	28.9	800	900	41.9	58.3
Other	700	1,500	56.0	147.0	3,100	3,300	111.2	159.0	3,800	4,800	167.2	306.0
Total Non-Predators	13,500	10,900	1,080.0	1,068.2	25,100	29,000	900.6	1,397.2	38,600	39,900	1,980.6	2,465.4
Unknown Causes	2,400	2,200	192.0	215.6	5,100	3,500	183.0	168.6	7,500	5,700	375.0	384.2
Total Loss	19,000	18,000	1,520.0	1,764.0	47,000	49,000	1,686.4	2,360.8	66,000	67,000	3,206.4	4,124.8

1/ Using average reported value for Ewes 1+. 2/ Lamb values equal to market year average price received for lambs multiplied by an average weight of 60 pounds per lamb. 3/ Totals may not add due to rounding. – Denotes less than 100 head.

U.S. February Egg Production

U.S. egg production totaled 6.62 billion during February 2003, up 1 percent from last year. Production included 5.63 billion table eggs and 985 million hatching eggs, of which 927 million were broiler-type and 58.0 million were egg-type.

The total number of layers during February 2003 averaged 338 million, up slightly from a year earlier. February egg production per 100 layers was 1,957

eggs, up 1 percent from February 2002.

February 2003 contained 20 weekdays, one holiday and four Saturdays, the same as February 2002.

All layers in the U.S. on March 1, 2003, totaled 338 million, up slightly from a year ago. The 338 million layers consisted of 278 million layers producing table type eggs, 57.4 million layers producing broiler-type hatching eggs, and

2.62 million layers producing egg-type hatching eggs. Rate of lay per day on March 1, 2003, averaged 69.6 eggs per 100 layers, down 1 percent from a year ago.

Laying flocks in the 30 major egg producing States produced 6.18 billion eggs during February 2003, up slightly from a year ago. The average number of layers during February, at 316 million, was down slightly from a year ago.

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Peggy Stringer, State Statistician
Curtis E. Lund, Deputy State Statistician
Retta Johnson, Editor
10 W. 15th Street, Suite 3100, Helena, Montana 59626
406-441-1240 or 1-800-835-2612
www.nass.usda.gov/mt/ nass-mt@nass.usda.gov